**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend the claims as indicated.

1-11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) An intramedullary nail comprising:

an elongated nail body having a proximal end, a distal end for insertion into the medullary canal, a central axis and a total length L;

three locking sections along the length of the nail body between the proximal and distal ends, each locking section including a through-hole for receiving a locking screw; and

two distinct intermediate sections separating the three locking sections, the intermediate sections having fewer through-holes per unit length than each of the three locking sections,

wherein the locking section nearest the proximal end has a length $L_5$ forming an angle $\beta$ with the intermediate section adjacent the proximal locking section where $\beta$. is in the range of $7° < \beta < 13°$, and

wherein the locking section nearest the proximal end comprises an elongated through-hole.

13. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 12, wherein the intermediate sections have no through-holes

14. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 12, wherein the three locking sections include:

a proximal locking section extending from the proximal end toward the distal end over a length $L_5$, where $0.22\ L < L_5 < 0.28\ L$, and having a distal boundary;

a distal locking section extending from the distal end toward the proximal end over a length $L_6$, where 0.18 L<L.sub.6<0.22 L, and having a proximal boundary; and an isthmus locking section located between the distal and proximal locking sections, and having a proximal boundary, a distal boundary and a length $L_7$ where $0.08\ L < L_7 < 0.15\ L$.

15. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 14, wherein the proximal boundary of the isthmus locking section is spaced a distance $L_9$ from the distal boundary of the proximal locking section, where $0.27\ L < L_9 < 0.33\ L$.

16. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 14, wherein the distal boundary of the isthmus locking section is spaced a distance $L_{10}$ from the proximal boundary of the distal locking section, where $0.13\ L < L_{10} < 0.30\ L$.

17. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 16, where $0.32\ L < (L_{10} + L_6) < 0.50\ L$.

18. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 14, wherein the first intermediate section has a length $L_9$ between the proximal locking section and the isthmus locking section, and the first intermediate section has no through holes.

19. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 18, wherein the second intermediate section has a length $L_{10}$ between the distal locking section and the isthmus locking section, and the second intermediate section has no through holes.

20. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 14, wherein the isthmus locking section includes two through holes arranged at a relative angle .alpha. in the range of $60° < \alpha < 120°$.

21. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 1, wherein the through hole located nearest to the distal end is spaced a distance $L_D$ to the distal end, where $0.01\ L < L_D < 0.38\ L$.

22. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 1, wherein the through hole located nearest to the proximal end is spaced a distance $L_P$ to the proximal end, where $0.01\ L < L_P < 0.70\ L$.

23. (Currently Amended) An intramedullary nail comprising:

an elongated nail body having a proximal end, a distal end for insertion into the medullary canal, a central axis and a total length L;

a proximal locking section, distal locking section, and isthmus locking section spaced along the length of the nail body, the proximal locking section nearest the proximal end, the distal locking section nearest the distal end, and the isthmus locking section located between the proximal and distal locking sections, and each locking section including a through-hole for receiving a locking screw;

a first intermediate section separating the proximal and isthmus locking sections, and a second intermediate section separating the isthmus and distal locking sections, each intermediate sections having fewer through-holes per unit length than the locking sections,

wherein the proximal locking section forms an angle .beta. with the first intermediate section, where $\beta$ is in the range of $7° < \beta < 13°$, and

wherein the proximal locking section comprises an elongated through-hole.

24. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 23, wherein the intermediate sections have no through-holes.

25. (Previously Presented) The intramedullary nail of claim 23, wherein the isthmus locking section includes two through holes arranged at a relative angle $\alpha$ in the range of $60° < \alpha < 120°$.